

Testimony of Keely Widdecombe  
In support of  
***LD 1726: An Act to Build Maine's Economy by Supporting Child Care for Working Families  
sponsored by Senate President Troy Jackson***

Senator Baldacci, Representative Meyer, and distinguished members of the Health and Human Services Committee, my name is Keely Widdecombe. I am a Childcare Owner, and I live in South Thomaston. I'm testifying in support of LD 1726 An Act to Build Maine's Economy by Supporting Child Care and Working Families.

I support raising child care educator wages because this is one of the most important jobs and their salaries do not reflect their importance.

I support Maine developing a cost model tool that better supports our understanding of what it costs to provide quality care and education because right now all the responsibility is on the owners and our only funds come from parents. The cost to run the business and pay our employees is outweighing our income.

I support raising subsidy eligibility for Maine's lower income families because this take the burden of higher quality child care off the parents. All parents should be elegeable for a portion of their child's care.

I support more stable funding for child care programs by ensuring that subsidy reimbursement covers days when children are absent from their program because childcare centers need to pay their bills and employees regardless of whether or not a child attends. When you sign up a child for care it is based on their spot not on if they come. We cannot replace the income with someone else if the child is out a day.

I support Maine developing a long term plan to increase investments in child care programs while also increasing subsidy eligibility because it will all lead to better opportunities for employees working in this field.

I support providing funding to pay for child care for child care employees because this would be an amazing benefit. If we raise our rates to help pay our employees and the majority of our employees have children, it doesn't get them ahead.

I support shortening time periods for determining subsidy eligibility because parents lose their spots and end up having to be billed if they start their child before they receive their eligibility letter. Then child care center often get left with the unpaid bill because they parents cannot afford to pay it.

I support shortening time periods for child care programs receiving subsidy reimbursement because often the state is behind about a month and we know the money is coming, but our bills cannot wait. We ask parents to pay on the Friday before the week of care being paid for. We need this money in order to pay our employees. If we are going to take on more subsidy children, we can't be waiting for the money.

Please vote in support of LD 1726,  
Keely Widdecombe